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ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3564
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 2355
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 2473
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0983
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 000924

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR B.WALCH
DRL FOR N. WILETT
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/15/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: ZANU-PF INSIDER'S VIEW OF THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i. Katherine Dhanani for reason 1.4
(d)

SUMMARY

11. (C) ZANU-PF deputy minister of water resources Walter Mzembi discussed Zimbabwe's current political situation with polecon chief on October 15. While Mzembi broke no new ground, he confirmed that ZANU-PF is split as to whether to go forward with an agreement with MDC. President Robert Mugabe supports an agreement, but he and others are concerned that too much MDC power could result in investigations and prosecutions of corrupt ZANU-PF officials. Mugabe is the glue holding the party together and there is likely to be little opposition to him from within the party in the short term for fear of the party splitting apart. The most progressive institution in the near term is likely to be Parliament where cross-party alliances will try to push the government forward. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) Mzembi is a Member of Parliament (MP) from Masvingo Province. He is considered a "young Turk" and as an agribusinessman has advocated, from within ZANU-PF, for a more free market economy. A member of the party Central Committee, Mzembi is one of the few young ZANU-PF members close to Mugabe, who relies on Mzembi as a source of information about the situation in Zimbabwe. Mzembi has been a U.S. Embassy interlocutor over the last several years. He told us he was able to meet with us because he sells his meetings with westerners to Mugabe as an opportunity to learn what we are thinking.

ZANU-PF Drags Feet on a Deal

13. (C) Mzembi said the party was divided on whether to go ahead with a power-sharing deal. Resistance came mainly from those close to Mugabe, particularly the service chiefs. He

also thought that Reserve Bank governor Gideon Gono was "running scared." He wanted a position in government, probably as finance minister, but saw himself being left out of an inclusive government.

14. (C) On October 13, Mzembi said he attended a meeting with Mugabe and party insiders, including Emmerson Mnangagwa. Mugabe told the group they would not be in the position of negotiating with the MDC had ZANU-PF members worked harder in the March elections. Nevertheless, he now favored concluding the agreement. According to Mzembi, discussion focused on the finance ministry. Mugabe was inclined to let it go. Opposition to this was based on the fact that MDC leadership of finance--and also home affairs--would facilitate investigation and prosecution of high level ZANU-PF officials; some of those at the meeting wanted guarantees they would be left alone.

15. (C) Mzembi said he himself favored reaching an agreement. He thought the MDC, particularly Tendai Biti, had been too public in its criticism of ZANU-PF and in announcing where it wanted to take the country. He implied many in the ruling party were paranoid about what could happen to them, and stated that a gentler, more conciliatory approach would be more productive. Mzembi admitted he admired the MDC for its battles against ZANU-PF and for having come as far as a position in government. What was most important now was not which ministries the MDC controlled, but for MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai to negotiate firm control for the Prime Minister of all government ministries so that ministers could

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not go behind his back to Mugabe and other ZANU-PF officials.

The Future of ZANU-PF

16. (C) Mzembi told us that within ZANU-PF there are a number of young reformers such as himself who would like to see change. This must come gradually, however. He explained that if he were to openly oppose ZANU-PF leadership, his business interests would be crushed by the party. He also pointed to Simba Makoni, who thought he could lead a break-away group from ZANU-PF. People Makoni had counted on had never come forward, leaving Makoni as a voice in the wilderness.

17. (C) Mzembi opined that ZANU-PF leadership was old and that Mugabe's successor would be neither Mnangagwa nor the Mujurus, but would come from the younger, reformist part of the party. (He did not speculate on whom.) With a limited number of ministries, there would be a large number of MPs from both parties who would be disappointed at not receiving cabinet posts. Eventually, there were likely to be alliances across the aisle as these MPs from both parties challenged their leadership, and this could lead to a realignment of the parties.

18. (C) Mzembi said had been at recent meetings that included Mugabe and Mnangagwa and he doubted there was a rift between the two. He categorized as false reports that Mnangagwa had been beaten at Mugabe's behest and said these reports had been spread by a faction of the CIO.

Parliament and Progress

19. (C) Mzembi told us he believed an agreement would be completed between ZANU-PF and the MDC. The House of Assembly, the lower house, began sitting yesterday and one of the first items on its agenda would be adoption of Amendment 19, which would encapsulate the September 15 power-sharing agreement. This would pressure the parties to complete a deal, if one had not already been completed. Other

parliamentary priorities would be adoption of a budget and drafting of a new constitution.

¶10. (C) Parliament would provide a good opportunity, according to Mzembi, for ZANU-PF and MDC officials to meet, discuss, and to work together. He had already had an opportunity to talk about a ZANU-PF--MDC agreement with MDC spokesman Nelson Chamisa and he looked forward to working with other MDC MPs.

¶11. (C) We noted our hope that an equitable power-sharing agreement would be reached and that a new government would undertake political and economic reform that would ultimately result in international reengagement. To that end, it would be useful to meet now with ZANU-PF MPs, including those that would have ministerial roles. Mzembi acknowledged that the party looked askance at contacts with the West--party officials generally considered such contact akin to criminal activity--but thought that after a new government was formed contacts would be tolerated, although probably not yet welcomed.

COMMENT

¶12. (C) Mzembi represents a reformist part of ZANU-PF that

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is trying to move the party in the right direction to help shape its future and that of the country. For now, however, if an agreement is signed, it is likely that the old guard will attempt to cling to power in order to continue to benefit from patronage and to protect themselves from prosecution. We continue to believe that the road forward will be slow and bumpy. END COMMENT.

DHANANI